C/2025/5117

19.9.2025

Publication of the communication of an approved standard amendment to a product specification of a geographical indication in accordance with Article 5(4) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 [1]

(C/2025/5117)

COMMUNICATION OF APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

(Article 24 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143)

'Cabrales'

EU Reference No: PDO-ES-0081-AM04 – 25.6.2025

1. **Product name**

'Cabrales'

2. **Geographical Indication type**

☐ PGI

☑ PDO

☐ GI

3. **Industrial**

☑ Agricultural produce

☐ Wines

☐ Spirit drinks

4. **Country to which the geographical area belongs**

Spain

5. **Member State authority communicating the standard amendment**

Name

Directorate-General for Rural Development and Agri-Food

6. **Qualification as standard amendment**

The amendments described and justified below do not involve a change in the name of the protected designation of origin or in the use of that name. They do not entail changes in origin, method or characteristics attributable to the origin and therefore do not entail a risk of invalidating the link or any new restrictions on marketing because, although one of these amendments involves the inclusion as an alternative of another, sturdier type of material for packaging one of the new product formats offered, the packaging and labelling of the end product by cheese dairies in the geographical area is already covered by the current documents.

They are therefore 'standard amendments' within the meaning of Article 24 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on geographical indications for wine, spirit drinks and agricultural products, as well as traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms for agricultural products, amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2019/787 and (EU) 2019/1753 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1151/2012.

[1] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2025/27 of 30 October 2024 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 of the European Parliament and of the Council with rules concerning the registration and the protection of geographical indications, traditional specialities guaranteed and optional quality terms and repealing Delegated Regulation (EU) No 664/2014 (OJ L, 2025/27, 15.1.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2025/27/oj).

7. **Description of the approved standard amendment(s)**

Title

Alteration of packaging.

Description

This amendment affects Section B 'Product description' and Section E 'Production method' of the specification, as well as Section 3.2, 'Product description' and Section 3.5. 'Specific rules on packaging' of the single document.

3.1. Product presentation.

The incorporation of two new forms of product presentation (halves and portions) is proposed, as described below.

'The product may be marketed whole, in halves or portions, provided that it is packaged and its origin can be identified.'

The reference to the PDO Regulation, now repealed, has been deleted. This reference had mentioned the presentation and wrapping (packaging) of the product and included the possibility of using other materials for packaging the product in portions. This aspect will now be covered in Section E of the amended specification, worded as follows:

'The product is packaged in special food-grade paper. Alternatively, for portions, other, sturdier materials may be used in order to conserve the product.'

Furthermore, to provide clarity in the wording of the specification and avoid possible confusion, the following text has been added to the paragraph on packaging in Section E of the specification, which is already included in the current single document:

'Packaging must take place within the defined geographical area so as to guarantee the optimal conditions for ensuring the quality of the product. This allows the cheesemakers themselves to safeguard the product's authenticity and makes traceability checks easier.'

☑ This amendment affects the single document.

Title

Change to the production method

Description

This amendment affects Sections B) 'Product description', D). b) 4. 'Proof that the product originated in the area' and E) 'Production method' of the specification, and Section 3.2 of the single document.

3.2. Production method

The wording of the 'salting', 'unmoulding' and 'ripening' stages has been amended.

The following text:

'The cheeses are then salted: the top surface is sprinkled with dry salt and they are left to sit for 12 hours, after which they are turned and salted on the other side, leaving them to sit for another 12 hours, and are then unmoulded.

After being aired for about 15 days, they are taken to the natural caves for ripening.'

has been replaced by:

'The cheeses are then salted: the top surface is sprinkled with dry salt and they are left to sit for at least 12 hours, after which they are turned and salted on the other side, leaving them to sit for at least another 12 hours.

The cheeses can be unmoulded during or after salting.

After being aired for about 15 days, they are taken to the natural caves for the final ripening.'

And the following wording:

'Ripened for at least two months counting from the date of production of the curd.'

'The ripening process takes place in registered caves overseen by the Regulatory Board.'

has been replaced by:

'Ripened for at least two months following the date of production of the curd, for the most part in caves.'

'The ripening process is finished off in registered caves overseen by the Regulatory Board.'

☑ This amendment affects the single document.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

Designations of origin and geographical indications of agricultural products

'Cabrales'

EU Reference No: PDO-ES-0081-AM04 – 25.6.2025

1. **Name(s)**

'Cabrales'

2. **Geographical indication type**

☑ PDO

☐ PGI

☐ GI

3. **Country to which the defined geographical area belongs**

Spain

4. **Description of the agricultural product**

4.1. *Classification of the agricultural product in accordance with the Combined Nomenclature heading and code, as referred to in Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2024/1143*

0406 – Cheese and curd

4.2. *Description of the agricultural product to which the registered name applies*

Blue-veined cheese made from raw cow's, sheep or goat milk or a mixture of two or all three types of milk – which must always be whole – with a balanced composition in terms of fats and proteins.

Ripened for at least two months counting from the production of the curd, mostly in caves.

Characteristics of the ripened cheeses:

Shape: cylindrical with smooth sides,

height: from 7 to 15 centimetres.

Weight and diameter: variable. The diameter must never be less than the height of the cheese.

Rind: soft, thin, creamy, grey – orange-brown in colour with possible reddish-yellow areas.

Paste: Creamy consistency, although with a varying degree of stickiness, depending on the cheese's level of fermentation. Compact, and without eyes. White in parts, with greenish-blue veins. Slightly sharp flavour, which is stronger in cheeses made from pure sheep or goat milk or a mixture of the two.

Fat: no less than 45 % in dry matter.

Minimum moisture content of 30 %

The product may be presented for sale whole or in halves or portions.

4.3. *Derogations on sourcing of feed (for products of animal origin designated by a Protected Designation of Origin only) and restrictions on sourcing of raw materials (for processed products designated by a Protected Geographical Indication only)*

The livestock is fed according to traditional practices, making direct use of the pastures and supplementing this with fodder.

Raw cow's, sheep or goat milk from livestock farms located in the defined geographical area. Rennet exclusively of animal origin.

4.4. *Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area*

Both the production of the milk and the processing and ripening of the cheese must take place in the defined geographical area.

4.5. *Specific rules concerning packaging, slicing, grating etc. of the agricultural product to which the registered name refers*

The product is packaged in special food-grade paper. Alternatively, for portions, other, more resistant materials may be used in order to preserve the product.

Packaging must take place within the defined geographical area so as to guarantee the optimal conditions for ensuring the quality of the product. This allows the cheesemakers themselves to safeguard the product's authenticity, and makes traceability checks easier.

4.6. *Specific rules concerning labelling of the agricultural product to which the registered name refers*

The commercial labels on the cheeses must bear the words 'Denominación de Origen Protegida Cabrales', as well as the EU logo for Protected Designations of Origin.

They must also bear a secondary label, each with its own serial number, codified according to the format of the cheese it is certifying. These secondary labels must be approved, checked and supplied by the inspection body in such a way that they cannot be reused.

4.7. *Concise definition of the geographical area*

The production area of the milk suitable for making 'Cabrales' cheese comprises the villages of Arangas, Arenas, Asiego, Berodia, Bulnes, Camarmeña, Canales, Carreña, Escobar, Inguanzo, La Molina, La Salce, Ortiguero, Pandiello, Puertas, Poo, Sotres and Tielve in the municipality of Cabrales, and Oceño, Cáraves and Rozagas in the municipality of Peñamellera Alta, all of which fall within the Picos de Europa area in the province of Asturias.

The cheese is also made and ripened in the production area.

5. **Link with the geographical area**

Summary of the link

Specific character of the product

The specificity of Cabrales cheese, which makes it unique in relation to other cheeses, is determined by its organoleptic characteristics (rind and body).

Specificity of the area

This is reflected in the following natural and human factors:

1 – Natural factors

The Picos de Europa, situated in the south-eastern part of the province of Asturias and extending somewhat into Leon and Cantabria, are made up of mountainous massifs that rise from the northern slopes of the Cantabrian Mountains, and vast pastures situated at altitudes above 800 metres.

2 – Human factors

Due to the isolation experienced by generations of inhabitants in this area, their economy is based on the thorough use and exploitation of the natural resources.

Firstly, the resources of the human settlements located in the Picos de Europa were traditionally based on the use of pastures in the summer to feed a range of livestock, in general coming from the villages on the borders of the Picos. During the summer, the livestock are free to roam the hard to access pastures of the 'peña' (the name given to the Picos de Europa by local residents). Every small village has its own fold, which is farmed communally, but is made up of various herds, each owned by a different resident. In the summer, they are transferred to a few residents who are responsible for looking after and managing the livestock, while the others remain in the village and focus on harvesting and haymaking.

Secondly, thanks to the specific expertise of the local producers and the fact that difficulties in communication meant that the points of consumption were far away, the milk was made into cheese by the livestock farmers themselves.

Causal link between the specific nature of the area and the production and characteristics of the product

(a) Ripening caves

The existence of caves and caverns of different sizes and characteristics is due to karst formations and the peculiar dynamic between air and water found in the limestone mass of the Picos de Europa, which is one of the widest in Europe.

The ripening caves are sometimes close to the fold or the herder's house, but the majority are far away, and access along the winding mountain paths is difficult. They are located at altitudes between 800 and 1 200 metres, and those at higher altitudes are considered to be preferable.

The conditions a cave must meet in order to be suitable for ripening 'Cabrales' are as follows: it must be deep, with a north-facing entry; it must have at least two openings to the outside (one for access and another for ventilation) to create a current of air inside known as a 'soplado'; and it must have flowing water. This causes the air in the cave to move slightly and gives it very high humidity (over 90 %), while keeping the temperature between 6 °C and 10 °C.

In these conditions, the walls are covered with mould, principally *Penicillium roqueforti*, and the air currents or 'soplados' loosen its spores, which fall on the cheese, germinate and spread through the body of the cheese.

In order to ripen sufficiently, the cheeses must remain in the caves for 2 to 5 months on wooden shelves ('talhjaameras'). During this time they are periodically turned and cleaned.

After the ripening process, the cheeses used to be wrapped in maple leaves (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) to make them easier to handle when they were put on sale. Nowadays, for cheeses covered by the designation of origin, this practice has been replaced by the use of food-grade paper packaging with leaves printed on it.

(b) Reputation

There are accounts that attest to the reputation of 'Cabrales' cheese. For example, the writings of Jovellanos (18th century), Madoz's *Diccionario Geográfico*, published in the early 19th century, and González Solís's *Memorias Asturianas* all state that Cabrales cheeses were presented at the Madrid Agricultural Exhibition in 1857, alongside other Asturian products.

In 1911, in their report on dairy farming in Santander, the Alvarado brothers began their journey in the region of Cabrales, climbing the Picos de Europa to see with their own eyes the caves of the livestock farmers who make the famous 'Cabrales' cheese.

Electronic (URL) reference to the publication of the product specification

https://run.gob.es/wzoCabralN25